

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 PM-09 NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 PRS-01 OPR-02 M-03 A-01 SY-07 NEA-10

EB-11 RSR-01 /099 W

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R 061310 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1589

INFO AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

USCINCSO

DIA/ DOD

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 2380

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, AR

SUBJECT: IRIBARREN ASSASSINATION FOLLOW- UP

REF: A) BA 2309; B) BA 2255; C) BA2232 (NOTAL)

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. APRIL 5 AND 6 PRESS HAS PROVIDED SOME MISSING PIECES TO PUZZLE OF THE APRIL 4 ASSASSINATION OF ARMY COL. HECTOR IRIBARREN. INVESTIGATION IS CONTINUING IN KIDNAPPING APRIL 2 OF RADM(R) FRANCISCO ALEMAN; HOWEVER, NO COMMUNIQUE FROM CAPTORS WITH RANSOM DEMANDS HAS BEEN VERIFIED. TWO OTHER KIDNAPPINGS WHICH INVOLVE US FIRMS ALSO RECEIVING WIDE PUBLICITY WITH ONE VICTIM HAVING BEEN RELEASED AND NEGOTIATIONS FOR RELEASE OF OTHER ABDUCTEE STILL UNDERWAY. GENERAL REACTION FROM MILITARY, PRESS, AND CIVILIAN CIRCLES (INCLUDING PERONISTS) HAS BEEN ONE OF SHOCK AND REVULSION. END SUMMARY.

2. MORNING APR 5 AND 6 PRESS HAS CLARIFIED TO A DEGREE EARLIER CONFUSING REPORTS ON APRIL 4 ASSASSINATION OF COL. HECTOR IRIBARREN, HEAD OF THE INTELLIGENCE DETACHMENT OF THE THIRD ARMY CORPS, IN CORDOBA. WHILE BASIC DETAILS OF ACTUAL ASSASSINATION AS REPORTED IN REFTEL A ARE CORRECT, LATER REPORTS
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INDICATE ASSASSINS WERE NOT CORNERED AS FIRST REPORTED, BUT WERE ABLE TO ESCAPE. ASSAILANTS NARROWLY MISSED RUNNING DOWN VICTIM' S WIFE WHO HEARD SHOTS AND RUSHED FROM THEIR NEARBY RESIDENCE TO HER HUSBAND' S SIDE. GENERAL OPINION BASED ON EVENTS IS THAT KIDNAPPING NOT RPT NOT PRIMARY MOTIVE OF KILLERS. IDENTITY OF ASSASSINS, PRESUMABLE EXTREMISTS, STILL UNKNOWN; HOWEVER, MORNING APR 6 PRESS REPORTS THE PUBLICATION OF A COMMUNIQUE BY THIRD ARMY CORPS IN WHICH MONTONEROS (NOMINALLY PERONIST; ULTRA- CATHOLIC NATIONALIST) TAKE CREDIT . ELABORATE SECURITY OPERATIONS IN SEARCH OF ASSASSINS CONTINUING IN CORDOBA AREA.

3. INVESTIGATION CONTINUES IN APR 2 KIDNAPPING OF RADM(R) FRANCISCO ALEMAN, FORMER UNDERSECRETARY OF THE ARGENTINE MERCHANT MARINE (SEE REFTEL B). WHILE ACT BEING ATTRIBUTED TO TROTSKYITE EJERCITO REVOLUCIONARIO DEL PUEBLO (ERP), NO VERIFIED COMMUNIQUE FROM VICTIM' S CAPTORS HAS BEEN FORTHCOMING. HOWEVER, INVOLVEMENT OF A NEPHEW OF ALEMAN' S WIFE ALONG WITH THAT OF A NIECE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE BANCO DE LA NACION IN THE KIDNAPPING HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED . IN A DRAMATIC APPEAL FOR HER HUSBAND' S RELEASE, THE VICTIM' S WIFE ON APR 4 CALLED ON ALL MOTHERS TO TAKE CARE OF THEIR CHILDREN TO PREVENT THEIR BECOMING SUBVERSIVES, A VIRTUAL ADMISSION OF THE INVOLVEMENT OF A RELATIVE.

4. COMPANY OFFICIALS INDICATE NEGOTIATIONS ARE CONTINUING FOR THE RELEASE OF ANTHONY DE CRUZ, TECHNICAL OPERATIONS MANAGER OF THE LOCAL KODAK PLANT, WHO WAS ALSO KIDNAPPED APR 2 (SEE REFTEL C), BUT ARE CONFIDENT SETTLEMENT WILL BE REACHED. BANK OF BOSTON BRANCH OFFICE MANAGER IN ROSARIO, GERARDO SCALMAZZI, WAS RELEASED UNHARMED EARLY MORNING APR 4 FOLLOWING A WEEK OF CAPTIVITY AND PAYMENT OF A RANSOM IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF FIVE MILLION PESOS (APPROXIMATELY US\$500,000). IDENTITY OF CAPTORS IN BOTH CASES NOT CLEAR AT PRESENT TIME.

5. REACTION TO THE IRIBARREN ASSASSINATION AND THE KIDNAPPINGS, PARTICULARLY THAT OF ALEMAN, HAS COME FROM BOTH MILITARY AND CIVILIAN, CIRCLES. RULING JUNTA HAS MET SEVERAL TIMES THIS WEEK, AND IN ONE COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AFTER THE ALEMAN KIDNAPPING, THEY REAFFIRMED INTENT OF THE ARMED FORCES TO CARRY OUT INSTITUTIONALIZATION PROCESS AND OF THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE
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ALL NECESSARY MEASURES TO MAINTAIN ORDER AND CALM AS WELL AS

SECURITY OF CITIZENRY. THOSE BRANCHES DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY THE IRIBARREN ASSASSINATION AND THE ALEMAN KIDNAPPING, I. E., THE ARMY AND THE NAVY, HAVE ISSUED SEPARATE STRONG DECLARATIONS WHICH PLACED BLAME FOR DEEDS ON THOSE WHO DO NOT WANT POWER TURNED OVER TO CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT ELECT. STATEMENTS ALSO RATIFIED SUPPORT FOR INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE COUNTRY. COMDEMNATIONS OF THE RECENT TERRORIST ONSLAUGHT HAVE ALSO COME FROM MOST POLITICAL PARTIES RANGING FROM THE CONSERVATIVE NUEVA FUERZA TO THE FAR LEFT PARTIDO SOCIALISTA DE LOS TRABAJADORES.

6. WHILE PRESIDENT- ELECT HECTOR CAMPORA HAS NOT YET ISSUED A STATEMENT DENOUNCING TERRORISM, THERE ARE REPORTS THAT HE WILL DO NEXT WEEK IN CORDOBA DURING THE COURSE OF A CAMPAIGN SWING THROUGH THE PROVINCES, WHERE A SECOND ROUND OF BALLOTING IS TO TAKE PLACE APR 15. PRESS REACTION TO THE EPISODES, THOUGH LIMITED, HAS REFLECTED GENERAL REVULSION AND SHOCK. IN A STRONGLY- WORDED EDITORIAL IN ITS APRIL EDITION, THE PERONIST DAILY MAYROIA STATED THAT VIOLENCE NOT MERELY PREOCCUPATIONOF PRESENT GOVERNMENT BUT EVEN MORE SO OF NEXT, AND THAT THESE " ROMANTIC ACTS" SHOULD HAVE DISAPPEARED WITH THE ACCEPTANCE BY THE GOA OF VICTORY OF THE FRENTE JUSTICIALISTA IN THE MAR 11 ELECTIONS AND THE PROMISE OF THE ARMED FORCES TO HONOR THOSE ELECTIONS. ANY CONSIDERATION OF A BROAD AMNESTY, THE EDITORIAL CONCLUDES, SHOULD NOW INCLUDE SOME RETHINKING ON THE SUBJECT OF " GUERRILLAS" IN LIGHT OF CURRENT EVENTS.

7. COMMENT. REAFFIRMATION BY ARMED FORCES THAT THEY WILL TURN POWER OVER TO GOVERNMENT- ELECT ON MAY 25 NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS SHOULD REASSURE SOME WHO FEAR THAT RENEWED TERRORIST OFFENSIVE WILL FORCE MILITARY TO REMAIN AT HELM.

8. EMBASSY PERONIST SOURCES HAVE NOT DIRECTLY CONFIRMED REPORTS THAT PRESIDENT- ELECT CAMPORA WILL SOON ISSUE STATEMENT DENOUNC- ING VIOLENCE, BUT DO INDICATE THAT EXTREMIST ACTIVITY HAS BECOME NUMBER ONE CONCERN OF THE FRENTE WITH LESS THAN FIFTY DAYS UNTIL THE INAUGURATION CEREMONIES. RETHINKING OF THE " POLITICAL PRISONER " ISSUE BY THE PERONISTS MAY WELL BE UNDERWAY, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE PERONISTS THEMSELVES MAY BECOME THE TARGETS OF SUCH ACTS IN THE FUTURE.

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9. ANOTHER POSSIBLE MOTIVE FOR THE ALEMAN ABDUCTION MAY BE TO USE VICTIM AS INSURANCE AGAINST ANY POSSIBILITY OF " ELIMINATION" BEFORE MAY 25 OF EXTREMISTS PRESENTLY BEING HELD BY THE AUTHORITIES.
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